In 2006 and 2007, 650 pilots were trained by various airlines. These include 543 by National Aviation Company of India, 38 by Jet Airways, 27 by Kingfisher Airlines, 32 by Indigo.

Removal of fuel surcharge

724. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the aviation fuel prices are falling and are now at levels seen in September 2005;

(b) if so, whether Government would prevail upon the domestic airlines companies to eliminate fuel surcharge on tickets to pass on the benefit to travellers; and

(c) whether Government has convened a meeting of the CEOs of all domestic airlines to discuss removal of fuel surcharge?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir. In January 2009, average Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) price is almost at par with average ATF price of financial year 2005-06.

(b) Domestic Airlines have reduced the fuel surcharge in the range of Rs.200/- to 400/-. Further, JetLite, Spicejet, Go Air and IndiGo have abolished the congestion charge.

(c) No, Sir.

Cargo handling at Chennai Airport

725. SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Chennai Airport is facing the risk of losing its cargo business for lack of infrastructure at its air cargo complex;

(b) whether cargo import at Chennai airport now touches around 12000 tones, where as it has the infrastructure to handle only 4000 tones which was the earlier monthly average; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The import cargo touched 10,000 metric tons per month during April to November, 2008. Chennai airport has adequate infrastructure to handle 1,25,000 metric tons of import cargo per annum. In the XIth Plan, Airports Authority of India has worked out capacity expansion to handle 2,50,000 metric tons of import cargo against the demand of 1,86,000 metric tons.

FDI in domestic carriers

726. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to permit foreign airlines to invest upto 25 per cent in domestic airlines;